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SCC Meeting, January 2, 1980
Afghanistan: Harold Brown's Trip to China

Current plans for Secretary Brown's trip to China were outlined in his December 29 memo to President Carter. Essentially, they contemplate the following steps of relevance to the current Soviet invasion of Afghanistan:

- Public acknowledgement that we are consulting with the PRC about the Afghanistan situation;
- Private exploration of possibilities for US-PRC cooperation in facilitating support for Afghan insurgents and steps to bolster the security of Pakistan;

- Proposals for gradually expanding contacts with the PRC defense establishment, establishment of special communications facilities for conveying messages between Washington and Beijing during crises, and conveying the USG decision on Landsat D -- all of which will underscore the potential for expanded Sino-US defense cooperation in the future;

- A public stance that characterizes these steps as the natural by-product of a normal political relationship. Current plans call for leaving on the record Vice-President Mondale's disclaimers of US interest in a "military relationship" with Beijing (i.e., no joint military planning, no formal security relationship, no arms sales).

Should we wish to go beyond this in order to force the Soviets to pay a higher short-term price for their recent actions, we might consider the following measures:

1. Propose on-going mechanism for continued Sino-US consultations concerning Afghanistan, e.g., announcement of early follow-up discussions in Beijing or Washington between senior State and Defense officials and PRC counterparts concerned with the Southwest Asian security issues.

2. Publicly state that Dr. Brown would explore ways to coordinate US and Chinese support for Pakistan in light of the threat posed to Pakistan's security. This would go beyond discussion to active cooperation and would imply that further cooperation was possible. Specifically, we could seek Chinese agreement to permit overflights of aircraft and equipment being delivered to Pakistan by the U.S. This would provide a more direct route for such deliveries from the US west coast than around Southeast Asia, and would permit us to help transport Chinese military aid to Pakistan as well.

3. Link Soviet aggression against Afghanistan to a decision to differentiate between the USSR and the PRC on technology transfers in announcing the Landsat D decision in Beijing. This could still pose some difficulties within COCOM. However, given Soviet actions in Afghanistan, it is unlikely to precipitate the kind of Congressional backlash on the US-PRC Trade Agreement that was earlier feared. Subsequent visible steps to engage the Western Europeans and Japanese in discussions of this issue could also serve to remind the

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Soviets that their actions in Afghanistan could facilitate growing security cooperation among the US, Japan, China, and NATO.

4. Adjust our public posture on arms sales. Current policy statements emphasize that we will sell arms neither to the PRC nor the USSR. Under the circumstances, we might indicate that given Soviet willingness to use arms against its neighbors and our own stake in a strong, secure, and friendly China, we will have to reexamine our policy on the sale of military equipment to China.

5. Adjust our policy on third country arms sales from one of acquiescence to one of active encouragement. The effect of such a shift, however, is uncertain as Third Country sales are stalled as much by Chinese indecision as European reluctance. Moreover, if our allies see this as a softening of the US position with the likelihood of eventual US arms sales to China, they may wait for us to take the lead -- and the heat -- from the USSR for such sales.

6. If pressed by the Chinese to sell specific military equipment, initiate (and publicize) a review of the policy implications of such sales. Since the PRC has in the past registered interest in various US arms, including F-16s, one cannot rule this out. However, there are such sensitive and delicate issues involved, that we should take care not to rush into decisions that have not been carefully analyzed not only for their impact on US-Soviet and Sino-US relations, but their consequences for our long-standing allies as well.

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